

## CVRI Pilot Grant Guidelines

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## **I. Title of competition**

Dr. Margaret "Marmie" Perkins Hess Heart Research Pilot Grant

## **II. Overview**

The CVRI pilot grant competitions offer operating funds to explore new and innovative cardiovascular-related research (e.g., proof-of-concept projects) with potential for development into large scale or longer-term projects that would be competitive for funding by external sources. This grant provides one year of funding for research projects that will lead to enhanced knowledge of cardiovascular (CV) disease, treatment or patient care, or the molecular mechanisms, cellular processes or physiological function of the CV system.

Funding for the pilot grant program is generously provided through the Dr Margaret "Marmie" Perkins Hess Endowment for Heart Research and distributed based on a full costing model.

## **III. Eligibility Requirements**

All applications must be pertinent to cardiovascular health or disease. The proposed research project must be a novel project or approach that is not already funded by other sources. The funding from these pilot grants cannot be used as matching or top-up funding. principal investigators, co-investigators and collaborators must be able to demonstrate an independent stipend/salary source.

The principal investigator (PI) on the application:

- must hold a full-time academic appointment and be eligible to hold research funds at the University of Alberta
- may only submit one application (maximum) per competition

Co-Investigators must hold an academic position at the University of Alberta and may include academic faculty, clinical academic colleagues, postdoctoral fellows, clinical/health fellows or residents/sub-specialty residents. Collaborators are not restricted to the University of Alberta.

The PI and any Co-Investigators must be full CVRI members. Applications not meeting these criteria will be withdrawn from the competition without notice.

Grants are tenable at the University of Alberta only.

## **IV. Budget Details**

All funding requests are limited to a maximum of \$50,000. The budget request in this grant application represents the total budget for a 12-month period of support.

Eligible expenses include (but are not limited to):

- salaries (including benefits) for research assistants, technical staff, postdoctoral fellows;
- stipends for summer and graduate students;
- materials, supplies and other expendables;

- equipment (cost may not exceed \$5000);
- laboratory animals and animal facility fees;
- computer/CPU time, data access charges and library resources;
- publication costs;
- travel (limited to a maximum of \$2,000 total for conference attendance (includes transportation, registration fees, accommodation and per diem/meals, etc. as per the University of Alberta's Policies and Procedures Online (UAPPOL) [Travel Processes and Expense Procedure](#));
- travel required for the collection of research data (mileage paid according to the allowable expenses in the UAPPOL [Travel Processes and Expense Procedure](#) ).

Ineligible expenses include:

- secretarial and clerical support;
- stipend for the research team faculty members;
- facility renovations;
- maintenance of equipment;
- membership fees;
- equipment purchases valued greater than \$5000
- indirect costs of research

## V. Research Project

All proposed research must evidence clear scientific merit, relevance to cardiovascular research and the ability to complete the work within the 12-month period of the grant. Knowledge translation, such as presentation and/or publication are expected to occur within 24 months of the awarding of the grant. The project proposal must clearly detail the work to be conducted by the PI and any Co-Investigators. The role of any collaborators and any resources they have committed must also be clearly described in the proposal.

The research project should not be substantially altered from that submitted in the original application. If significant changes become necessary, the principal investigator must inform the CVRI and seek approval before any substantial deviation from the research plan is made.

## VI. Application

The CVRI supports the University of Alberta's efforts to maintain the highest standards regarding research and scholarship practice and behaviour. By submission of the application, the principal investigator asserts that the information provided in the document(s) is accurate and adheres to all research policies and procedures in place at the University of Alberta. The CVRI reserves the right to request institutional confirmation of assertions contained within this application.

Misrepresentations of authorship, credentials or research support may result in disqualification of the application from this competition. If misrepresentation has been found in association with any CVRI grant or award submission, further actions may include the withdrawal of any remaining installments of support on an existing grant/award, partial or full repayment being sought for any past financial grant/award support provided

and the disqualification of the principal investigator and/or research team member(s) from future competitions for a time period determined solely by the CVRI.

For more information, please refer to the [UAPPOL Research and Scholarship Integrity Policy](#).

### Application Process

The Pilot grant program is directed to projects with high potential to provide critical data to support a subsequent tri-council or other national or international grant competition application and should be designed and described accordingly.

Applications are accepted on the [CVRI Pilot Grant Application form](#) only which includes the following:

1. Principal Investigator and research team information
2. Project details (research location, category (pillar 1,2,3 or 4), ethics requirements)
3. Research Proposal
  - a. Lay title and summary (0.25 page)  
Information may be used and/or released publicly. Ensure the language is suitable for a broad/lay audience (grade 8 level without scientific or technical terms). Do not include any confidential information.
  - b. Scientific title and summary (0.5 page)
  - c. Project Proposal (maximum 5 pages plus a maximum of an additional 2 pages for figures, tables, legends etc. References are not included in the page count):
    - i. Detailed scientific proposal clearly stating the aims of the project, experimental design, methods and analysis;
    - ii. Compelling rationale for the hypothesis;
    - iii. Preliminary data (optional);
    - iv. Details of the research team and who will be responsible for which aspect of the project (including collaborators), the rationale for their involvement and a description of the research environment where the work will take place, and;
    - v. Description of how sex and gender are integrated into the research design and data analysis.
  - d. Relevance to cardiovascular research (0.5 page)  
Description of how the proposed work is expected to accelerate progress and benefit the cardiovascular research field, and clearly address what expected "next steps" might follow the completion of the project.
  - e. Work plan outlining main tasks/milestones and estimated work end dates (1.0 page)  
List of the main tasks/milestones involved in the completion of the project with estimated work end dates for each item.

- f. Budget summary (1 page) and justification (up to 2 pages) related to the supplies, equipment and personnel associated with the project.
4. Investigator Qualifications
    - a. [CIHR Biosketches](#) are required for the Principal Investigator and all Co-Investigators

- Co-Investigator Biosketches

A co-investigator is an individual who contributes directly to the research activities and their role must be clearly defined in the proposed research activities.

Each co-investigator must provide a copy of their CIHR Biosketch directly to the principal investigator. The principal investigator must upload the co-investigator biosketches within the application submission form.

Co-Investigator biosketches must be provided directly to the principal investigator. The principal investigator must upload the required biosketch forms and/or letters of collaboration within their application form. The CVRI will not solicit or accept biosketches directly from the co-investigator(s).

- Collaborators

A collaborator is an individual whose role in the proposed research activities is to provide a specific resource or service.

The role of any collaborators and any committed resources must be clearly detailed within the proposal.

NOTE: The CVRI pilot grant application form and all application material/documentation, including CIHR biosketches, must be complete and received by the submission deadline; late submissions will not be accepted. Applications submitted with missing information or documentation will be received as-is and considered only if program eligibility is met.

## **VII. Review Process**

All eligible applications are forwarded to a CVRI Grant Assessment Committee and undergo peer-review according to the program review criteria.

The CVRI uses the [CIHR pillars of health research](#) to allocate the applications to an appropriate committee. The CVRI makes the final decision as to the review panel members and applications are forwarded to the panel where overall expertise and/or capacity to review the proposed work is available.

Committees are composed of experts from the University of Alberta and are broadly representative of the application demographic for this program opportunity. In instances where conflict of interest is a concern or applicable expertise cannot be adequately found internally to the University of Alberta, external reviewers may be used.

## VIII. Review Criteria and Scoring

All applications that are forwarded to the committee undergo rigorous peer-review in a similar manner to CIHR review processes.

Scientific merit is assessed and weighted based on the following:

<b>Review Criteria</b>	<b>Scoring Allocation</b>
Quality of Proposal	75%
Quality of Research Team	15%
Impact / KT	10%

The above criteria are reviewed using the rating scale provided below:

<b>Narrative Rating</b>	<b>Numerical Rating</b>
Outstanding	4.4 – 4.9
Excellent	4.0 – 4.3
Very Good	3.5 – 3.9
Good	3.0 – 3.4
Needs Revision	2.5 – 2.9

Applications discussed by committee are determined based on assessment of relevance and scoring. The review committee can request discussion of any/all applications, including applications that have not met the threshold for committee discussion. Full application discussion will result in a committee consensus recommendation and Scientific Officer Notes. Applications recommended for funding consideration must have been discussed by committee.

## IX. Competition Results

Awardees will be posted on the CVRI website. Notification of funding and competition feedback will be emailed to the principal investigator 1 week following the competition results announcement. In the event of a discrepancy between the website posting and the formal outcome letter, the website posting constitutes the notification of outcome.

Institutional sponsors will be notified for the successful applicant(s) only (see Institutional Sponsorship below).

## X. Institutional Sponsorship

All successful applications must be institutionally sponsored on behalf of the principal investigator. Application sponsorship confirms eligibility of the applicant, appropriate institutional support is in place to achieve the proposed/funded research and that all signees have reviewed and agreed that 1) the application meets research scholarship and practice requirements and 2) is consistent with UAPPOL policies and procedures. Please refer to the [Meaning of Signatures](#) for details on sponsorship responsibilities.

Institutional sponsors will be notified and the applicable approvals sought for successful applications only. Note, institutional signatures are not required at the application stage. The CVRI will initiate the approval process and account activation by entering the successful application and notices of award into the Research Administration Services Researcher Homepage on behalf of the awardees. Please be advised, the CVRI will have access to view all the PIs funded projects through the Researcher's Homepage.

Funds from this pilot grant must be managed from a separate account and may not be commingled with any other funds. The CVRI must be listed as the fund sponsor.

Where changes to employment, and/or human resources concerns arise that affect institutional sponsorship, the CVRI must be notified without delay.

## **XI. Award Funding**

Funds awarded through the CVRI pilot grant program will be divided equally across CIHR pillars divided between pillars 1, and pillars 2-4. That is, if two awards are being offered in a given year, one will be awarded to a Pillar 1 proposal and the other a Pillars 2, 3 or 4 proposal. In years when only one grant is being offered, the highest ranked proposal will be supported. Details of the number of grants available and the research stream being supported for each competition will be outlined in the call for applications.

Funds will be provided as a lump sum at the beginning of the 1-year term of the grant. At the end of the period of support, any residual funds not accounted for in an approved extension will be recovered by the CVRI.

A PI may only hold one pilot grant at any given time.

### Deferred implementation

Where either research support (such as staffing, equipment) or institutional approval (such as ethics) will/may not be in place by the required start date, an awardee may opt to defer the implementation of the award. Awards may be deferred for a maximum of 3 months from the earliest award commencement date. A deferred start date exhausts no-cost extension eligibility in the same manner as an end date no-cost extension.

A deferred start date must be requested prior to the CVRI release of the notification of funding. The CVRI will consider a deferred implementation for a grant only once. Where an awardee has benefitted from a deferral and the project does not commence on the deferred start date, the grant funds are forfeited and the CVRI's financial commitment is void.

### Extension Requests

In the event that progress is delayed after award implementation, the CVRI may consider a no-cost extension to the period of support. In order for the CVRI to assess extension eligibility, a formal progress report with a request to extend the award must be submitted to the CVRI a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the end of the period of support.

Awards may be eligible for a single, one-time extension to a maximum of one year where reporting supports that the research will be completed, up to and including publication/research outcomes as defined by the

funding application within the period of extension. Any unused funds remaining at the end of the extension period must be returned to the CVRI.

## **XII. Leaves of absence**

### Paid leave of absence

CVRI awardees who take a paid leave of absence (includes maternity/paternity leaves) during the term of the award must provide the CVRI with formal notification prior to the commencement of the leave. This notification should be supported by the awardee's department chair or faculty dean. Following the period of leave, the awardee may request an extension to the term of the award equal to the time allocated to the leave but not exceeding 1 year.

### Unpaid leave of absence

The CVRI must be notified of any unpaid leaves of absence not less than 1 month prior to the leave start date and will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis. The CVRI may consider extending the award by an amount of time not exceeding the duration of the approved leave up to a maximum of 1 year. Formal notification of the intent to return from a leave along with the award extension request must be provided to the CVRI within one month of returning. The formal notification and extension request must include institutional support to reinstate the award.

## **XIII. Reporting**

### Research Day presentation

Either during the term of the award or no later than the June following the end of the period of support, a member of the research team is expected to present the outcomes of the funded pilot grant project at the CVRI Research Day event.

### Final reporting

The PI must complete and submit the report form within 60 days of the project end date. An email reminder with the report due date will be sent to the PI to facilitate reporting.

Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in ineligibility to apply for future CVRI funding programs or interrupt access to current CVRI grant and/or awards.

## **XIV. Communication and acknowledgements**

All publications, including public messages, arising from research supported by CVRI grants and/or awards must acknowledge the support of the CVRI. Specific funding acknowledgement for each competition is provided on the competition results posting and additional details can be found on the CVRI website.

Awardees are asked to inform the CVRI in advance if their research will be published in a major journal and/or receive media coverage. The CVRI reserves the right to publish and/or disseminate information related to CVRI funded grants and awards and awardees may be highlighted in CVRI communication.



## **XV. Award Termination**

The CVRI reserves the right to terminate any award if the conditions of the award are not met or if there is evidence of unsatisfactory progress. The PI must immediately notify the CVRI of any changes to the research team, particularly if the change may affect eligibility to hold an award. This includes but is not limited to termination of employment and leaves of absence.

## **XVI. Contact information**

Any questions regarding the CVRI pilot grant program should be directed to the CVRI at [cvri@ualberta.ca](mailto:cvri@ualberta.ca).